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(71) Applicant (*for all designated States except US*): REMOTELIGHT, INC. [US/US]; P.O. Box 14188, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (*for US only*): HORTON, Isaac [US/US]; 8824 Stage Ford Rd, Raleigh, NC 27615 (US). GARRETT, Kurt [US/US]; 8220 Hobhouse Circle, Raleigh, NC 27615 (US).

(74) Agent: GLASGOW, Jinan; Glasgow Law Firm, P.O. Box 28539, Raleigh, NC 27611-8539 (US).

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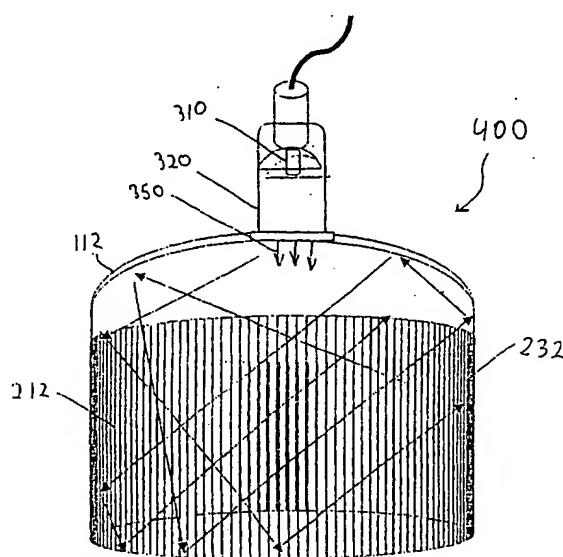
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(54) Title: DRINKING WATER UV DISINFECTION SYSTEM AND METHOD



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(57) Abstract: An ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system and method for treating fluids including a configuration and design to function effectively with at least one UV light source or lamp that is not submerged in the fluid, which provides exposure to at least one UV dose zone. The UV light source may be presented in a vertical riser configuration, wherein the UV light source is positioned above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving upward toward the UV light source. Alternatively, the UV light source may be presented in a non-vertical riser configuration, wherein the UV light source is positioned above the fluid within a reservoir and a UV dose zone projected downward into the static fluid.

1 DRINKING WATER UV DISINFECTION SYSTEM AND METHOD

2 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

3 This non-provisional utility patent application claims the benefit of one or more
4 prior filed co-pending non-provisional applications; a reference to each such prior
5 application is identified as the relationship of the applications and application number
6 (series code/serial number): The present application is a Continuation-In-Part of
7 application 09/630245, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

8 Background of the Invention9
10 (1) Field of the Invention

11 The present invention relates generally to a system and method for ultraviolet
12 disinfection and, more particularly, to a system and method for ultraviolet disinfection of
13 drinking water.

14 (2) Description of the Prior Art15
16 UV Mechanism of Action

17 It is well known in the art to use ultraviolet light (UV) for the disinfection
18 treatment of water. Ultraviolet light, at the germicidal wavelengths, alters the genetic
19 (DNA) material in cells so that bacteria, viruses, molds, algae and other microorganisms
20 can no longer reproduce. The microorganisms are considered dead, and the risk of
21 disease from them is eliminated. As the water flows past the UV lamps in UV
22 disinfection systems, the microorganisms are exposed to a lethal dose of UV energy. UV
23 dose is measured as the product of UV light intensity times the exposure time within the
24 UV lamp array. Microbiologists have determined the effective dose of UV energy to be
25 approximately about 34,000 microwatt- seconds/cm² needed to destroy pathogens as well

1 as indicator organisms found in water. Typical prior art disinfection systems and devices
2 emit UV light at approximately 254 nm, which penetrates the outer cell membrane of
3 microorganisms, passes through the cell body, reaches the DNA and alters the genetic
4 material of the microorganism, destroying it without chemicals by rendering it unable to
5 reproduce.

6 Ultraviolet light is classified into three wavelength ranges: UV-C, from about 200
7 nanometers (nm) to about 280 nm; UV-B, from about 280 nm to about 315 nm; and UV-
8 A, from about 315 nm to about 400 nm. Generally, UV light, and in particular, UV-C
9 light is "germicidal," i.e., it deactivates the DNA of bacteria, viruses and other pathogens
10 and thus destroys their ability to multiply and cause disease, effectively resulting in
11 sterilization of the microorganisms. Specifically, UV "C" light causes damage to the
12 nucleic acid of microorganisms by forming covalent bonds between certain adjacent
13 bases in the DNA. The formation of these bonds prevents the DNA codon from being
14 read correctly for replication, and the organism is neither able to produce molecules
15 essential for life process, nor is it able to reproduce. In fact, when an organism is unable
16 to produce these essential molecules or is unable to replicate, it dies. UV light with a
17 wavelength of approximately between about 250 to about 260 nm provides the highest
18 germicidal effectiveness. While susceptibility to UV light varies, exposure to UV energy
19 for about 20 to about 34 milliwatt-seconds/cm² is adequate to deactivate approximately
20 99 percent of the pathogens.

21 *Regulation of Drinking Water Standards*

22 Exposure to pathogens does not always cause disease; whether drinking
23 contaminated water could produce disease depends on the type and quantity of pathogen

1 ingested and the health (nutritional and immunological) status of the person drinking the
2 water. After studying certain variables, including the species and number of pathogens,
3 the World Health Organization (WHO) has determined a standard of performance that
4 must be met by acceptable water disinfection systems. The standard requires that an
5 acceptable water disinfection system must be able to process contaminated water with
6 100,000 CFUs (colony forming units) of *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) per 100 ml of water
7 and produce outlet water with less than one CFU per 100 ml.

8 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, as set forth in
9 the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWRs), have specific
10 requirements for the levels of certain bacteria, protozoa, and viruses. *Giardia lamblia*, a
11 protozoon, and all viruses must be 99.9% killed or inactivated. Heterotrophic
12 microorganisms cannot exceed 500 colony-forming units (CFUs) per ml. No more than
13 5.0% of samples can be total coliform-positive in a month, and there can be no fecal
14 coliforms present. Fecal coliforms and *E. coli* are bacteria whose presence indicates that
15 the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes
16 can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms.

17 *Prior Art*

18 Typically, prior art devices and systems for disinfecting water via ultraviolet light
19 exposure commonly employ standard ultraviolet light sources or lamps encased in quartz
20 sleeves and suspended in the water being treated. Benefits of using ultraviolet light for
21 disinfecting water include the following: no chemicals, like chlorine, are needed to ensure
22 effective water disinfection provided that the proper number of lamps are used and
23 properly positioned for a given influent and flow rate; since no chemicals are required in

1 the disinfection process, no storage and/or handling of toxic chemicals is required; no
2 heating or cooling is required to ensure disinfection; no storage tanks or ponds are
3 necessary because the water can be treated as it flows through the system; no water is
4 wasted in the process; no change in pH, chemical or resistivity of the water being treated;
5 approximately at least 99.99% of all waterborne bacteria and viruses are killed via UV
6 light exposure for disinfection; thereby providing increased safety of using the system
7 and effectiveness of same.

8 As set forth in the foregoing, prior art UV water treatment systems disinfect and
9 remove microorganisms and other substances from untreated, contaminated water sources
10 and produce clean, safe drinking water. The core technology employed in WaterHealth
11 International's system includes a patented, non-submerged UV light. This technology is
12 claimed by WHI to be a recent and tested innovation developed at the Lawrence Berkeley
13 National Laboratory, a premier, internationally-respected laboratory of the U.S.
14 Department of Energy managed by the University of California. This prior art system
15 delivers a UV dose of up to 120 mJ/cm², which is more than three times the NSF
16 International requirement of 38 mJ/cm² and exceeds World Health Organization and
17 EPA water quality standards and effectively treats bacteria, viruses and *Cryptosporidium*
18 in drinking water. In addition, recent research conducted at two different laboratories
19 indicates that UV doses of 10 mJ/cm² or less produce 4-log reductions in *Giardia*. Based
20 on this research, UV dosage of up to 120 mJ/cm² greatly exceeds the dosage required for
21 inactivation of *Giardia*. Additional components included in WaterHealth International's
22 systems effectively treat specific problems such as turbidity, silt, tastes, odors and various
23 chemicals.

1 The UV light source used in prior art are typically low pressure mercury lamps,
2 which can effectively clean water of dangerous and illness-causing viruses and bacteria,
3 including intestinal protozoa such as Cryptosporidium, Giardia, and E. coli, provided that
4 the proper number and configuration of lamps are included in the system.

5 Prior art UV disinfectant systems work best when the water temperature is
6 between about 35 and about 110 degrees Fahrenheit, since extreme cold or heat will
7 interfere with the UV system performance. Home temperatures are typically in this
8 range.

9 Among applications for UV disinfection systems for water include the beverage
10 industry, wastewater treatment, and surface treatment. By way of example and
11 explanation, hot filled beverages, cold filled beer and other sensitive drinks are
12 susceptible to contaminants introduced by the liners of closures. Mold is of particular
13 concern since packaging headspace frequently contains low levels of oxygen. Medium
14 pressure UV inactivates mold spores to prevent this problem, including contamination of
15 beverages during production and storage, which can cause discoloration, unusual taste or
16 bad flavor, and reduced shelf life. UV disinfection systems solve these issues by
17 eliminating problem microorganisms without adding chemicals or heat. Disinfection of
18 municipal water using UV light avoids problems associated with storage, transport and
19 use of chemicals and associated regulation for them. Ultraviolet light can help improve
20 shelf life of products and allow processors to reduce chemical additives in wash water
21 without sacrificing high levels of disinfection. UV light provides non-chemical microbial
22 control for captive water loops without altering the taste, color or odor of the food.
23 Environmentally safe UV disinfection is one of the few water treatment methods

1 unburdened by regulatory restrictions, consumer/environmental group concerns or high
2 operation costs.

3 *Problems Associated with Prior Art*

4 Generally, UV disinfection is a safe and reliable means for disinfecting drinking
5 water for daily use, particularly given its relatively rapid, inexpensive, non-taste and
6 odorless resultant treated water. UV light is a World Health Organization-approved
7 method of disinfecting drinking water (Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality, vol. 1,
8 World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 1993, p. 135). However, UV
9 disinfection is not generally recommended for long-term storage of water. Although UV
10 disinfection will reduce pathogen levels to an acceptable level, a minuscule quantity of
11 microbial contaminants may not be sterilized by the UV irradiation. Once the UV
12 irradiation treatment is terminated, microbes that have survived the sterilization process
13 may be able to replicate. Therefore, an ongoing disinfection system is required for long-
14 term storage of water and other fluids. The most common means of maintaining water at
15 an acceptable purity for long periods of time is through the addition of reactive chlorine.
16 Unfortunately, evidence is mounting that organic chemical byproducts of chemical
17 disinfection, especially byproduct of chlorination such as dioxane, are carcinogens and/or
18 toxins for humans. Therefore, chemical disinfection is not a viable alternative when
19 chemical purity of the fluid is desired and/or required. Additionally, in spite of this
20 toxicological evidence, the EPA has recently been forced to relax restrictions on certain
21 known carcinogenic chlorination by-product, such as chloroform. Additionally, other
22 chemicals, such as the nitrate ion, have been shown to negatively influence the
23 development of children.

1 In light of the emerging data concerning the toxicity of organic and inorganic
2 chemicals and the relaxation of water purity regulations, persons interested in
3 maintaining their health have been pursuing the supply of chemically pure water.
4 Generation of such water requires filtration to remove the chemicals. Unfortunately,
5 systems based on filtration require frequent replacement and/or cleaning of filters. In
6 addition, storage of such water requires a system to maintain sterility for extended
7 periods of time. Thus, there exists a need for a system that can easily remove or
8 eliminate organic compounds from drinking water and maintain the sterility of that water
9 during storage.

10 Current UV sterilization systems employ a submerged UV light system.
11 Disadvantageously, a submerged UV light system requires cleaning and maintenance of
12 the exterior of the system in order to protect the UV lamp or light source used in nearly
13 all prior art systems. This cleaning can become a time-consuming duty, especially when
14 working with multi-lamp low-pressure systems. During operation while the UV lamps
15 and surrounding quartz sleeves are suspending in the water to be treated, minerals and
16 contaminants in the water deposit onto the quartz sleeves, thereby causing fouling on the
17 sleeve surface. This fouling reduces the effectiveness of the UV lamps because the
18 fouling interferes with the UV light transmission into the water. To save time and
19 prevent quartz sleeve fouling a cleaning mechanism can be supplied for either manual or
20 automatic operation, like using wiper glides over the sleeves to remove deposits, which
21 may block the light emitted from the UV lamp. This provides improved performance and
22 reduces maintenance time, but only where the water quality is low. In every case, the
23 UV lamps encased in quartz sleeves must be removed for cleaning on at least a monthly

1 basis, depending on specifics of a given system and its influent and flow rates. The
2 cleaning requires the system to be shut down temporarily or diverted to other UV lamps,
3 so system shut down decreases capacity and/or increases operating costs. Also
4 disadvantageously, UV lamps are susceptible to breakage, and if submerged, can
5 contaminate the surrounding water. Commercially, only WaterHealth, Inc., might in any
6 way suggest the use of non-submerged lamps for UV systems but these are limited
7 expressly in advertising literature as applicable only and exclusively in applications that
8 do not require high purification, e.g., previously purified drinking water but not surface
9 water, aquifer water, wastewater, or otherwise unpurified water treatment applications.

10 These prior art systems do not employ optical components nor reflective materials
11 or photocatalytic materials in the holding tank and reaction vessels.

12 Thus, there remains a need for a UV disinfection system for treating fluids having
13 reduced maintenance time and costs, increased flow rates for a given disinfection level,
14 lower overall equipment, installation, and system costs, reduced risk of fluid
15 contamination by equipment breakage, and capable of maintaining the sterility of fluids
16 for extended storage periods. Additionally, there remains a need for water purification
17 system that can remove or degrade organic compounds and other chemical contaminants
18 in fluids with reduced maintenance.

19 Summary of the Invention

20
21 The present invention is directed to a UV disinfection system and method for
22 treating fluids, particularly water, whereby the UV light source requires less maintenance
23 and cost than prior art systems and devices while providing at least the same disinfection
24 level for a given influent and flow rate thereof.

1 One object of the present invention is to provide a UV disinfection system for
2 treating fluids configured and arranged to function effectively with at least one UV light
3 source or lamp that is not submerged in the fluid to be disinfected. The UV light source
4 is positioned outside the fluid to be disinfected via exposure to at least one UV dose zone
5 wherein UV light is projected into the zone.

6 Another object of the present invention includes presentation of the UV light
7 source presented in at least two primary configurations: a vertical riser configuration and
8 a non-riser, holding tank configuration. In the vertical riser configuration the UV light
9 source is positioned above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone
10 downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving upward toward
11 the UV light source. Alternatively or in series combination with the vertical riser
12 configuration, the UV light source may be presented in a non-riser, holding tank
13 configuration, wherein the UV light source is positioned above the fluid holding tank or
14 other container to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone downward toward and into
15 the fluid to be treated, with the fluid in a substantially static or non-moving conditions.

16 Still another object of the present invention is to provide a UV dose zone
17 including at least one zone, more preferably four zones, wherein one zone includes an
18 interface zone positioned between the UV light source and the fluid to be treated and
19 another zone includes a reaction zone positioned within the fluid. The reaction zone may
20 be formed by an interface plate that incorporates catalytic properties to enhance desired
21 reactions.

1 The present invention is further directed to a method for treating fluids by
2 disinfecting those fluids using UV light projected by at least one UV light source
3 producing at least one dose zone, the UV light source being positioned outside the fluid.

4 Accordingly, one aspect of the present invention is to provide a system and
5 method for disinfecting fluid including at least one UV light source positioned outside the
6 fluid to be treated with the at least one UV light source producing at least one UV dose
7 zone for disinfecting the fluid, wherein the fluid is water, preferably water that has been
8 previously treated for sterilization and/or disinfection.

9 Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a system and method
10 for disinfecting and purifying fluid including at least one UV light source positioned
11 outside the fluid to be treated with the at least one UV light source producing four UV
12 dose zones for disinfecting the fluid, with one zone provided at an interface zone, and one
13 zone provided at a reaction zone positioned between the UV light source and the fluid to
14 be treated. The reaction zone may be formed by an interface plate that incorporates
15 catalytic properties to enhance desired reactions

16 Still another aspect of the present invention is to provide a system and method for
17 disinfecting fluid including at least one UV light source positioned outside the fluid to be
18 treated with the at least one UV light source producing at least one UV dose zone for
19 disinfecting the fluid, wherein the at least one UV light source is a medium-to-high
20 intensity UV light source or spectral calibration lamp. These and other aspects of the
21 present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art after a reading of the
22 following description of the preferred embodiment according to the present invention
23 when considered with the drawings.

1 Brief Description of the Drawings

2 Figure 1A is an illustration of PRIOR ART in a side view.

3 Figure 1B is an illustration of other PRIOR ART in a side view.

4 Figure 2 is an illustration of a side view of a UV disinfection system constructed
5 according to the present invention in a vertical riser configuration.

6 Figure 3 is an illustration of an exploded side view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 2.

7 Figure 4 shows an illustration of a UV disinfection system of an alternative embodiment
8 of the present invention.

9 Figure 5 is an illustration of an exploded side view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 4.

10 Figure 6 is an illustration of the UV dose zones generated in a vertical riser configuration.

11 Figure 7 is an illustration of the UV dose zones generated in an alternative embodiment
12 of the present invention.

13 Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

14 In the following description, like reference characters designate like or
15 corresponding parts throughout the several views. Also in the following description, it is
16 to be understood that such terms as "forward," "rearward," "front," "back," "right,"
17 "left," "upwardly," "downwardly," and the like are words of convenience and are not to
18 be construed as limiting terms.

19 Referring now to the drawings in general, the illustrations are for the purpose of
20 describing a preferred embodiment of the invention and are not intended to limit the
21 invention thereto. Figure 1A shows a prior art UV fluid disinfection system that includes
22 a submerged UV lamp configuration PA16 around which fluid to be treated flows. The
23 fluid enters through an inlet PA12, flows around the UV lamp PA 16, and exits the
24 system through an outlet PA 14. Figure 1B shows a prior art UV fluid disinfection

1 system that includes a submerged UV lamp configuration PA20 surrounded by a
2 substantially static or non-flowing fluid PA24. Disadvantages of the prior art systems as
3 set forth in the foregoing background section include high maintenance time and costs,
4 low flow rates for a given disinfection level, high overall equipment, installation, and
5 system costs, and high risk of fluid contamination by equipment breakage.

6 By contrast to prior art, the present invention is directed to an ultraviolet (UV)
7 disinfection system and method for treating fluids including a configuration and design to
8 function effectively with at least one UV light source or lamp that is not submerged in the
9 fluid. Advantageously, the non-submerged configuration of the present invention
10 prevents the problems associated with breakage of the lamp and/or lamp housing and
11 fouling of the lamp housing. Additionally, the non-submerged configuration of the
12 present invention prevents the problems associated with extreme temperatures in the
13 fluid. Fluorescent lamps, including UV lamps, lose a significant amount of output at low
14 temperatures. Thus, a non-submerged system, which separates the lamp from the fluid
15 to be treated, allows for the temperature of the lamp to be maintained at more optimal
16 temperature, without necessitating cooling or heating the fluid as well. Thus, this system
17 more efficiently disinfects extreme environments, such as freezers, coolers, hot water
18 heaters, and the like.

19 *Vertical Riser Configuration (VRC)*

20 The UV light source may be presented in a vertical riser configuration according
21 to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, as shown generally at 100 in Figure
22 2, wherein the fluid exits a reservoir or holding container 110 via a pipe or outlet 120 into
23 the vertical riser configuration (VRC) 200 and passes therethrough prior to discharge

1 from the pipe or outlet 140 for consumption or end use. Preferably, the fluid is a pre-
2 treated water that has already been disinfected and purified, possibly with low total
3 dissolved solids therein. Furthermore, the VRC, as shown generally at 200 in Figure 3,
4 includes at least one UV light source 310. This UV light source 310 is part of a lamp
5 assembly, as shown generally at 300 in Figure 5. The lamp assembly 300 is composed of
6 a housing 320 that encases the UV light source 310, UV light rays 330, at least one
7 optical component 340, and UV light ray output 350 that exits the housing. Referring to
8 Figure 3, the UV light ray output 350 exits the housing above the fluid 210 to be treated,
9 this fluid entering the VRC from the outlet pipe 120 of the holding container or reservoir
10 110 and being forced upward through the interior pipe 220 of the VRC 200 toward the
11 UV light ray output 350 that is projected downward toward the fluid surface 230 and into
12 the fluid 210 to be treated, once again with the fluid moving upward toward the UV light
13 source 310. At least one interface plate 240 may be fitted to the top of the interior pipe
14 220, thus increasing the exposure time of the fluid 210 to the UV light ray output 350.
15 The at least one interface plate 240 contains a hole or holes 250 that allows fluid rising
16 upward through the interior pipe 220 to exit at the top of the pipe. The fluid then
17 traverses across the superior surface 260 of the interface plate 240 to the plate edge 270,
18 where it then descends into the exterior chamber 280 of the VRC. The fluid is prevented
19 from returning into the interior pipe 220 by a base plate 290 that solidly connects the
20 exterior of the interior pipe 220 with the interior of the outer pipe 295. The fluid then
21 exits the VRC 200 through the pipe or outlet 140. The UV light rays 330 may be
22 projected downward from a UV light source or a lamp system 310 that includes optical
23 components. These optical components may include, but are not limited to, reflectors,

1 shutters, lenses, splitters, focalizers, mirrors, rigid and flexible light guides, homogenizer
2 or mixing rods, manifolds and other couplers, filters, gratings, diffractors, color wheels,
3 and the like. These optical components are internal to the lamp system and are positioned
4 between the UV light source or lamp 310 and the UV ray light output 350 of the lamp
5 assembly 300, thereby focusing, directing, and controlling the light ray output 350 that
6 irradiates the fluid 210 and that sterilizes any microorganisms that exist in the fluid 210.
7 The UV light ray output 350 irradiates and may also be transmitted through the fluid 210.
8 UV light ray output 350 that is transmitted through the fluid and strikes the reflective
9 interior surfaces (not shown) of the VRC components is reflected back into the fluid
10 where it may strike microorganism. The reflection of the UV light ray output 350 back
11 into the fluid by the reflective interior surfaces of the VRC components enhances the
12 killing capacity of the VRC system 200.

13 Additionally, the interface plate may possess catalytic properties such that certain
14 reactions are catalyzed in the vicinity of the interface plate. For example, TiO₂ may be
15 incorporated into the interface plate that is made of glass or other appropriate material.
16 When such a plate is irradiated with catalyst-activating wavelengths, fatty acids and other
17 organic chemicals are chemically reduced, resulting in degradation to smaller volatile
18 products such as methane, ethane, etc. Additionally, nitrate ion is reduced to elemental
19 nitrogen in such a system. Thus, the incorporation of TiO₂ into the interface plate with
20 subsequent UV irradiation reduces the levels of two potential human toxins – organic
21 chemicals and nitrate ion.

22 In addition, the interface plate may induce turbulence or cause fluid cascade with
23 a non-planar surface, stair-step surface, downwardly sloping surface, or other the like.

1 The induction of turbulence is particularly advantageous when the fluid is turbid.
2 Turbidity, which is the state of water when it is cloudy from having sediment stirred up,
3 interferes with the transmission of UV energy and decreases the disinfection efficiency of
4 the UV light disinfection system. Thus, turbulence, by inducing rotation in the particle,
5 causes all aspects of a particle to be exposed to the UV light. Additionally, the
6 photocatalytic properties of the system reduce turbidity by degrading the compounds or
7 particles responsible for the turbidity. Furthermore, the reflective aspects of the surfaces
8 of the system enhance the efficacy of the system when operated under turbid conditions
9 because the UV light can strike the various aspects of a particle with the need for the
10 particle to be rotating, thus overcoming the opacity of the particle. Another aspect that
11 enhances performance under turbid conditions is the high UV light intensity of the
12 system. The high UV light intensity can more easily compensate for fluctuations in
13 turbidity than lower-intensity systems. Thus, the preferred embodiment has several
14 characteristics which enhance its performance under turbid conditions.

15 In cases where the water has high iron or manganese content, is clouded and/or
16 has organic impurities, it is usually necessary to pre-treat the water before it enters the
17 UV disinfection stage because deposits on the quartz-encased submerged UV lamps,
18 which are immersed in the water to be treated, interfere with the UV light transmission,
19 thereby reducing the UV dose and rendering the system ineffective. Prior art typically
20 employs UV purification in conjunction with carbon filtration, reverse osmosis and with
21 certain chemicals to reduce fouling between cleanings of the quartz sleeves that surround
22 the UV lamps. Thus, another advantage of the preferred embodiment is that turbidity

1 reduction is not necessary for the system to perform adequately, and thus the system
2 eliminates the need for expensive pre-treatment of the fluid to reduce turbidity.

3 Advantageously, the disinfected, purified water that exits the total system from
4 the VRC device is completely free from microorganisms without requiring the addition of
5 chemicals or other additives that would increase the total dissolved solids in the water.
6 Thus, the disinfection process according to the present invention has not changed the
7 taste, pH, resistivity, and other characteristics of the exiting water.

8 Another factor in the design of a UV disinfection system and method according to
9 the present invention where the VRC is used involves the integration of two main
10 components, including the non-submerged UV light source system and the hydraulic
11 system. The light source system includes a housing surrounding and supporting a UV
12 light source or lamp having at least one optical component positioned and arranged to
13 direct the UV light rays toward and through an output, thereby introducing UV light rays
14 toward a fluid for disinfection of the fluid.

15 The hydraulic system includes a hydraulic tube and pumping system for forcing
16 the fluid upward through the tube toward the light source(s). The present invention
17 includes the use of hydraulic systems that comprise a transporter or pumping system, and
18 at least one interface plate. The hydraulic system serves at least three functions: it carries
19 water influent to an interface and provides flow to at least one interface plate and
20 discharges the treated influent water to a reservoir or water system. The VRC system
21 may include quick-connect lamps and housings with a monitoring and indicator system
22 that would indicate that a lamp had failed. Each riser in the VRC system may have an
23 individual, dedicated lamp and optical system with overlap between neighboring lamps to

1 eliminate dead zone. Each riser in the VRC system may also have a valve that shuts off
2 the riser in case of failure.

3 *Non-Riser Configuration*

4 Alternatively or in combination with the VRC system, a non-VRC configuration
5 is advantageously constructed and configured to provide UV disinfection from a non-
6 submerged UV light source for a reservoir, holding container, or other non-flowing water
7 storage, however temporary the water dwell time may be. Preferably, the fluid is pre-
8 treated water that has already been disinfected and purified, possibly with low total
9 dissolved solids therein. This pretreatment may have occurred in a VRC system that
10 incorporates a catalytic plate to reduce organic and inorganic contaminants in the water,
11 in addition to disinfecting the water. As illustrated in Figures 4 & 5, the present
12 invention, generally referenced 400, is a non-riser configuration (NRC) that includes at
13 least one UV light source 310. This UV light source 310 is part of a lamp assembly, as
14 shown generally at 300 in Figure 5. The lamp assembly 300 is composed of a housing
15 320 that encases the UV light source 310, UV light rays 330, at least one optical
16 component 340, and UV light ray output 350 that exits the housing. Additionally, the
17 light source is connected to a timer, which permits the activation and/or deactivation of
18 the light source at a predetermined time, e.g., after the light source has been activated or
19 ON for a period of time adequate to sterilize the entire reservoir or container, as well as
20 after the light source has been activated or ON for a period of time. Referring to Figure
21 4, the UV light ray output 350 exits the housing 320 above the substantially static fluid
22 212 to be treated, this fluid being held in a holding container or reservoir 112 and not
23 being forced toward UV light ray output 350 that is projected downward toward the fluid

1 surface 232 and into the fluid to be treated 212, once again with the fluid 212 not being
2 forced toward the UV light source 310. The UV light ray output 350 may be projected
3 downward from a UV light source or a lamp system 300 that includes optical components
4 as previously described. These optical components may include, but are not limited to,
5 reflectors, shutters, lenses, splitters, focalizers, mirrors, rigid and flexible light guides,
6 homogenizer or mixing rods, manifolds and other couplers, filters, gratings, diffracters,
7 color wheels, and the like. These optical components are internal to the lamp system and
8 are positioned between the UV light source or lamp 310 and the UV ray light output 350
9 of the lamp system 300, thereby focusing, directing, and controlling the light ray output
10 350 that irradiates the fluid 212 and that sterilizes any microorganisms that exist in the
11 fluid 212. The UV light ray output 350 irradiates and may also be transmitted through
12 the fluid 212. UV light ray output 350 that is transmitted through the fluid and strikes the
13 reflective interior surface of the holding tank or container 112 is reflected back into the
14 fluid where it may strike microorganism. The reflection of the UV light ray output 350
15 back into the fluid by the reflective interior surface of the holding tank or container 112
16 enhances the killing capacity of the NRC system 400.

17 Advantageously, both systems have several UV dose zones established within
18 them. In the VRC system, as best shown in Figs. 3 and 5, the UV light source 310 is
19 positioned within a UV light source system 300, including optical components as
20 previously described, above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone
21 downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving from the influent
22 point 120, flowing vertically up the interior pipe 220 toward the UV light source 310, and
23 then exiting the interior pipe 220 through the interface plate 240. The at least one UV

1 light source is positioned above the fluid to be treated and projecting UV light ray output
2 350 downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving upward
3 toward the UV light source. Several UV dose zones are established within the VRC
4 system, generally shown as 500 in Fig. 6. The first zone is the light source system exit
5 UV dose zone 510, which occurs at the light source system and air interface. Then next
6 zone is the air UV dose zone 520, which occurs just beneath the UV light source and just
7 above the water and the at least one interface zone or plate 240. The next zone is the
8 vapor zone 525, which occurs just above the water surface. The next zone is the interface
9 zone UV dose zone 530, which occurs at the intersection of the water and the at least one
10 interface zone or plate 240. The at least one interface plate is used to provide a reaction
11 zone for UV disinfection of fluid flowing over the plate and to provide additional
12 treatment means for balancing pH, affecting effluent chemistry, providing a catalyst, and
13 the like. For example, TiO₂ may be incorporated into the interface plate to effect
14 reduction of ions and compounds. Specifically, TiO₂ is used to reduce nitrates and
15 nitrites to elemental nitrogen. Such a treatment is desirable, in that nitrates have been
16 linked to developmental defects in children. Additionally, TiO₂ incorporated in glass or
17 other suitable material and irradiated with catalyst-activating wavelengths will degrade
18 fatty acids and other organic compounds adjacent to exterior of the glass. Thus, such a
19 plate can be used to degrade organic contaminants found in water. Additionally, catalyst-
20 activating wavelengths can catalyze a variety of reactions, and the use of these
21 wavelengths with any one or combination of the plethora of available chemical catalyst
22 generates numerous possible catalytic combinations that are used to catalyze a myriad of
23 desirable reactions. The photocatalyst may include photo-activated semiconductors such

1 as Titanium Oxide; TiO₂ (photo activation wavelength; not more than 388 nm), Tungsten
2 Oxide; WO₂ (photo activation wavelength; not more than 388 nm), Zinc Oxide; ZnO
3 (photo activation wavelength; not more than 388 nm), Zinc Sulfide; ZnS (photo
4 activation wavelength; not more than 344 nm) and Tin Oxide; SnO₂ (photo activation
5 wavelength; not more than 326 nm). In addition to these catalysts, other catalysts, such
6 as PtTiO₂, are known.

7 TiO₂ may be preferably applied as the photocatalyst, considering that the
8 activation power is very high, the catalyst is long-lived with high durability, and safety
9 for human applications is certified, as TiO₂ has been used safely for a long time in
10 cosmetic and food applications. Additionally, the interface plate may be a biofilter, and
11 contain enzymes or bacteria that react with substrates contained in the fluid.

12 The last zone shown in Fig. 6 is the submerged UV dose zone 540, which creates
13 a variable UV dose zone that decreases in effectiveness at greater distances from the UV
14 light source.

15 For the generally static non-riser configuration, the zones are different than those
16 described in the VRC system. In the generally static non-riser system, generally shown
17 as 600 in Fig. 7, the first zone is the light source system exit UV dose zone 610, which
18 occurs at the light source system and air interface. Then next zone is the air UV dose
19 zone 620, which occurs just beneath the UV light source and just above the water surface
20 230. The next zone is the vapor zone 630, which occurs just above the surface of the
21 water. The last zone is the submerged UV dose zone 640, which creates a variable UV
22 dose zone that decreases in effectiveness at greater distances from the UV light source.

1 While generally regarding the UV light source and configuration thereof, the
2 preferred embodiment of the present invention includes at least one optical component
3 positioned between the UV light source and the UV light source system output point.
4 Advantageously, the use of optical components enables the system to maximize the
5 intensity, focus, and control of the UV light rays at the output for any given UV light
6 source or lamp. Also, optical components, including but not limited to reflectors,
7 shutters, lenses, splitters, mirrors, rigid and flexible light guides, homogenizer or mixing
8 rods, manifolds and other couplers, filters, color wheels, and the like, can be utilized in
9 combination to achieve the desired control and output, as set forth in U.S. patent numbers
10 6,027,237; 5,917,986; 5,911,020; 5,892,867; 5,862,277; 5,857,041; 5,832,151; 5,790,725;
11 5,790,723; 5,751,870; 5,708,737; 5,706,376; 5,682,448; 5,661,828; 5,559,911; D417,920
12 and co-pending applications 09/523,609 and 09/587,678 which are commonly owned by
13 the assignee of the present invention, and which are incorporated herein by reference in
14 their entirety. Additionally, optical component such as gratings, dichroic filters,
15 focalizers, gradient lenses, and off-axis reflectors may be used.

16 With regard to light guides, these may be fiberoptic lines composed of acrylic,
17 glass, liquid core, hollow core, core-sheath, or a combination.

18 With regard to lenses, several embodiments are envisioned. Imaging lenses,
19 such as a parabolic lens, and non-imaging lenses, such as gradient lenses, may be used.
20 A gradient lens collects light through a collecting opening and focuses it to an area
21 smaller than the area of the collecting opening. This concentration is accomplished by
22 changing the index of refraction of the lens along the axis of light transmission in a
23 continuous or semi-continuous fashion, such that the light is "funneled" to the focus area

1 by refraction. An example of gradient lens technology is the Gradium® Lens
2 manufactured by Solaria Corporation. Alternatively, a toroidal reflector, as described in
3 United States Patent 5,836,667, is used. In this embodiment, a UV radiation source, such
4 as an arc lamp, is located at a point displaced from the optical axis of a concave toroidal
5 reflecting surface. The concave primary reflector focuses the radiation from the source at
6 an off-axis image point that is displaced from the optical axis. The use of a toroidal
7 reflecting surface enhances the collection efficiency into a small target, such as an optical
8 fiber, relative to a spherical reflecting surface by substantially reducing aberrations
9 caused by the off-axis geometry. A second concave reflector is placed opposite to the
10 first reflector to enhance further the total flux collected by a small target.

11 Additionally, more than one reflector may be used with a lamp. For example,
12 dual reflectors or three or more reflectors, as taught in US Patents 5,706,376 and
13 5,862,277, may be incorporated into the preferred embodiment. These reflectors may
14 also be splitting reflectors and/or cascading reflectors.

15 In general, the transmissive optical components are UV transmissive and the
16 reflective optical components are UV reflective. Additionally, any of the optical
17 components, including the housing, may be made of acrylic or similar materials that
18 degrade over time when exposed to UV light. These components can be replaced when
19 their performance has deteriorated to an unacceptable level.

20 Notably, any number of lamps including low pressure, medium pressure, high
21 pressure, and ultra high-pressure lamps, which are made of various materials, e.g., most
22 commonly mercury (Hg) can be used with the system configuration according to the
23 present invention, depending upon the fluid or influent characteristics and flow rates

1 through the system. Furthermore, while high and ultra high pressure lamps have not been
2 used commercially to date by any prior art system, predominantly because of the low
3 energy efficiency associated with them and the lack of capacity for prior art design and
4 configuration formulas to include high pressure UV lamps, the present invention is
5 advantageously suited to accommodate medium to high to ultra high pressure lamps, all
6 of which can be metal, halogen, and a combination metal halide. Additionally, spectral
7 calibration lamps, electrodeless lamps, flashlamps, and pulsed lamps can be used.

8 In particular, a preferred embodiment according to the present invention employs
9 a pencil-type spectral calibration lamp. These lamps are compact and offer narrow,
10 intense emissions. Their average intensity is constant and reproducible. They have a
11 longer life relative to other high wattage lamps. Hg (Ar) lamps of this type are generally
12 insensitive to temperature and require only a two-minute warm-up for the mercury vapor
13 to dominate the discharge, then 30 minutes for complete stabilization.

14 A Hg (Ar) UV lamp, which is presently commercially available and supplied by
15 ORIEL Instruments, is used in the preferred embodiment according to the present
16 invention. The ORIEL Hg(Ar) lamp, model 6035, emits UV radiation at 254 nm. When
17 operated at 15 mA using a DC power supply, this lamp emits 74 microwatt/cm² of 254
18 nm radiation at 25 cm from the source.

19 The system according to the present invention uses UV lamps configured and
20 functioning above the fluid or water flow, not immersed in the fluid flow as with all prior
21 art systems designed for use in all water treatment applications. With this system, the
22 number of lamps necessary to treat a given influent and flow rate can be reduced by
23 perhaps a factor of ten, which is a major advantage in practical application. Also, the

1 lamps are not susceptible to fouling, since they are not immersed in the fluid to be
2 disinfected. Additionally, the design of the present invention allows for a significant
3 reduction in heat in the water. Furthermore, the maintenance and servicing is greatly
4 simplified. Also, in the vertical riser configuration according to one preferred
5 embodiment configuration according to the present invention, the reactor design, which
6 would comprise a number of cylindrical tubes oriented vertically, includes a hydraulic
7 system having pumping equipment and a significant amount of pumping power.
8 Furthermore, the present invention is an optical UV light source system for use in a fluid
9 disinfection system. As such, traditional mathematical models used for determining
10 energy efficiencies for the present invention are inadequate and inapplicable. Thus, given
11 the use of optical components associated with the UV light source, the use of medium to
12 ultra high pressure UV lamps, and the introduction of at least one UV dose zone existing
13 outside the water to be treated, the present system presents a revolutionary approach for
14 designing, constructing, and operating a UV fluid disinfection system that is nowhere
15 taught or suggested in the prior art or mathematical models for predicting fluid
16 disinfection and flow rates thereof.

17 Another preferred embodiment according to the present invention employs
18 medium to high-pressure UV lamps, more preferably high-pressure UV lamps.

19 In one embodiment according to the present invention, the UV light source is a
20 Fusion RF UV lamp, which is presently commercially available and supplied by Fusion
21 UV Systems, Inc. The fusion lamp is a preferred lamp for a planar vertical riser system
22 configuration, according to the present invention, to provide fast flow rates of the fluid
23 treated within the system. This fusion lamp has a spectrum like a low-pressure lamp,

1 having very strong UVB&C availability and output, but is a high power lamp having
2 approximately 200W/cm. Significantly, as set forth in the foregoing, no prior art teaches
3 or suggests the use of high pressure lamps, in fact, all standard formulas, including those
4 developed by Dr. George Tchobanoglous, for system design and operation use low
5 pressure lamps.

6 An additional advantage of high-power lamp systems is that extra-UV
7 wavelengths, when delivered at sufficient intensity, may destroy or otherwise inactivate
8 microorganisms as well. Several mechanisms of action are possible, but in general, the
9 high-dose light denatures cell components such as proteins, cell membranes, and the like,
10 and inactivates the microorganism.

11 The present invention advantageously includes all of the above features, in
12 particular because the UV lamps are separated from the flow stream and include light
13 delivery system that incorporates optical components. Without the use of optical
14 components in combination with the UV light source, the intensity of the light could not
15 be effectively focused, directed, and controlled to provide an efficacious disinfection
16 because the UV dosage at the water surface and thereunder would not be great enough to
17 sterilize the microorganisms.

18 However, the use of the vertical riser configuration creates even more surprising
19 results in that a multiplicity of UV dose zones are created as the fluid to be treated is
20 forced via a hydraulic system toward the UV light source system, including UV light
21 source or lamp and optical component(s).

22 The present invention allows a significantly simplified system; potentially
23 significantly lower operating costs, and the capacity to process large quantities of water

1 as well as relatively small quantities, as for personal or in-home use. For an in-home
2 system, as best illustrated in Fig. 2, a single vertical riser UV light source system, shown
3 generally at 200, is constructed and configured to be attached to a water storage unit sized
4 for a dwelling, between about twenty to about 100 gallons. In this system, the UV light
5 source 310 is positioned within a UV light source system 300, including optical
6 components as previously described, above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV
7 dose zone downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving from
8 the influent point 120, flowing vertically toward the UV light source, and then exits the
9 effluent point 140. The at least one UV light source is positioned above the fluid to be
10 treated and projecting UV light ray output 350 downward toward and into the fluid to be
11 treated, with the fluid moving upward toward the UV light source. Several UV dose
12 zones are established within the system. Several UV dose zones are established within
13 the VRC system, generally shown as 500 in Fig. 6. The first zone is the light source
14 system exit UV dose zone 510, which occurs at the light source system and air interface.
15 Then next zone is the air/vapor UV dose zone 520, which occurs just beneath the UV
16 light source and just above the water and the at least one interface plate 240. The next
17 zone is the interface plate UV dose zone 530, which occurs at the intersection of the
18 water and the at least one interface plate 240. The at least one interface plate is used to
19 provide a reaction zone for UV disinfection above the fluid and to provide additional
20 treatment means for balancing pH, affecting effluent chemistry, providing a catalyst, and
21 the like. The last zone is the submerged UV dose zone 540, which creates a variable UV
22 dose zone that decreases in effectiveness at greater distances from the UV light source.

1 Figure 4 is an illustration of a side view of another embodiment of the present
2 invention connected to a fluid reservoir and shown generally at 400. Notably, this
3 reservoir-based UV light source for disinfection may be advantageously combined with
4 the VRC system to ensure and guarantee the purity of the water exiting the overall
5 system. However, particularly where the water contained within the reservoir or holding
6 container has been pre-treated or purified in previous steps, the addition of the VRC
7 system may not be required as the non-VRC system constructed and configured to
8 disinfect the static fluid within the reservoir or container may reasonably and adequately
9 maintain the sterility and/or purity of the water.

10 Furthermore, the first aspect of the reservoir system is a fluid reservoir shown
11 generally at 110. In this system, the UV light source 310 is positioned within a UV light
12 source system 300, including optical components as previously described, above the fluid
13 stored in the reservoir 110 and projecting a UV dose zone downward toward and into the
14 fluid to be pre-treated. This reservoir fluid could be previously treated/purified or not.
15 As set forth in the foregoing, where the water contained within the reservoir or holding
16 container has been pre-treated or purified in previous steps, the addition of the VRC
17 system may not be required as the non-VRC system constructed and configured to
18 disinfect the static fluid within the reservoir or container adequately maintains the
19 microbial purity of the water.

20 The at least one UV light assembly is positioned above the water to be disinfected
21 or maintained at a disinfected state and projecting UV light ray output 350 downward
22 toward and into the water. Once again, the light source system is provided in the
23 reservoir system to prevent microorganism build-up in the reservoir. For completion of

1 the system for applications where purity must be guaranteed, a single vertical riser UV
2 light source system, shown generally at 200, is constructed and configured to be attached
3 to the reservoir system 400. In this system, the UV light source 310 is positioned within
4 a UV light source system 300, including optical components as previously described,
5 above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone downward toward and into
6 the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving from the influent point 120 (reservoir
7 effluent point), flowing vertically toward the UV light source, and then exits the effluent
8 point 140. The at least one UV light source is positioned above the fluid to be treated and
9 projecting UV light ray output 350 downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with
10 the fluid moving upward toward the UV light source.

11 Several UV dose zones are established within the system, generally shown as 500
12 in Fig. 6. The first zone is the light source system exit UV dose zone 510, which occurs
13 at the light source system and air interface. Then next zone is the air/vapor UV dose zone
14 520, which occurs just beneath the UV light source and just above the water and the at
15 least one interface plate 240. The next zone is the interface plate UV dose zone 530,
16 which occurs at the intersection of the water and the at least one interface plate 240. The
17 at least one interface plate is used to provide a reaction zone for UV disinfection above
18 the fluid and to provide additional treatment means for balancing pH, affecting effluent
19 chemistry, providing a catalyst, and the like. The last zone is the submerged UV dose
20 zone 540, which creates a variable UV dose zone that decreases in effectiveness at
21 greater distances from the UV light source.

22
23 Test Example
24

1 This section outlines the results of a water disinfection test using the Non-Riser
2 Configuration Home Disinfection System (NRC-HDS), as shown in Figure 4. This
3 example is not necessarily optimized, but a reduction to practice of a preferred
4 embodiment and not a limitation on configuration. This example is illustrative of what
5 can be done for a UV fluid disinfection system and method, wherein the fluid is water.
6 The test example with results follows:

7 *Test Example and Results - Non-Riser Configuration Home Disinfection System (NRC-*
8 *HDS)*

9 In this preferred embodiment according to the present invention of the home water
10 purifier, a single spectral calibration lamp is used. An example of such a lamp is the
11 ORIEL Instruments Hg (Ar) spectral calibration lamp model 6035. This lamp emits UV
12 radiation at 254 nm. When operated at 15 mA using a DC power supply, this lamp is
13 stated to emit 74 microwatt/cm² of 254 nm wavelength light at 25 cm from the source.
14 When operated at 18 mA, the lamp has a rated life of 5000 hours. The lamp is inserted
15 via a threaded coupling into the top of a stainless steel tank. The stainless steel tank is
16 cylindrical with a height of 61 cm and a diameter of 56 cm. The tank contains a vinyl
17 spigot approximately 1 inch from the base, a ½ inch stainless steel plug in the center of
18 the base, and a ½ inch stainless steel plug approximately 3 inches from the top. When
19 filled with 125 liters of water, there are approximately 4 inches of clearance between the
20 surface of the water and the top of the tank.

21 In a demonstration of the effectiveness of this preferred embodiment according to
22 the present invention, the tank was sterilized with UV light, then filled with 125 liters of
23 sterile, deionized water. The water was sterilized by UV irradiation for approximately 6

1 hours. After irradiation, the tank was allowed to ventilate until the odor of ozone had
2 abated. Samples were taken of the water to demonstrate that no coliform CFUs were
3 present prior to inoculation. Thereupon, 2 ml of a broth containing *E. coli* at
4 approximately 1.14×10^5 / CFUs/ml was added to the tank. The tank was agitated slowly
5 for 3 hours with a magnetic stirring apparatus to disperse the bacteria. 100 ml and/or 10
6 ml samples were collected by filtration through 0.45 micrometer filters. After filtration,
7 the filters were removed and placed in petri dishes containing an absorbent pad and
8 approximately 2 ml of coliform indicator media. Petri dishes were then incubated
9 overnight at approximately 37 degrees Centigrade. The tank was sampled periodically
10 for 3 hours to determine if the bacteria were dispersed and the spontaneous death rate of
11 the bacteria. The Hg (Ar) lamp was then turned on, and allowed to irradiate the tank
12 contents for 24 hours. Samples were collected at 5 and 15 minutes after turning on the
13 lamp, and every 15 minutes thereafter until 2 hours after turning on the lamp. Thereupon,
14 samples were collected at 30 minute intervals for another 2 hours, and a final sample was
15 collected at 8 hours. The results are present in Table 1 below. As can be seen from
16 Table 1, after 5 minutes irradiation, no CFUs were present in a 100 ml sample of water.
17 Thus, after only 5 minutes of irradiation, this preferred embodiment of the invention was
18 able to sterilize 125 liters of drinking water inoculated with approximately 2.3×10^5
19 CFUs of *E. coli*. Several factors, including the internal reflectance of the tank, are
20 believed to have contributed to the surprising efficacy of this system.

21

1
2
3 Table 1. Results of UV Irradiation by preferred embodiment according to the present
4 invention of water containing *E. coli*.¹

5

Timepoint (minutes)	UV	CFU count
-30	-	840 ²
0	-	710 ²
+5	+	0 ³
+15	+	0 ³

6
7 1 Approximately 2.3×10^5 CFUs of *E. coli* were added to 125 liters of sterile, deionized water and
8 UV-irradiated for 24 hours with an ORIEL Instruments Model 6035 UV spectral calibration lamp.
9 2 CFU counts detected in 10 ml of sampled water x 10.
10 3 CFU counts in detected in 100 ml of sampled water.

11

12 The several advantages of this system include the fact that the non-submerged
13 lamp does not require as extensive cleaning maintenance as a submerged lamp does to
14 remove fouling.

15 Additionally, this intermittent-type system arrangement beneficially extends the
16 lamp life thereby providing a longer replacement time or lamp life cycle. Since the lamp
17 life is degraded by turning it off and on, the system can be constructed and configured to
18 allow the reservoir to be significantly depleted before restarting the lamp (e.g., where a
19 purified water reservoir or tank is used, the lamp activity can be controlled,
20 preprogrammed, and otherwise regulated to correspond to the tank water size and water
21 level. Depending on the size of the reservoir, and the number of people using the system
22 (as measured in demanded or used gallons/day), the lamp is arranged, configured, and
23 programmed to run intermittently, e.g., for an hour or so per day. In this way, a lamp
24 continuous operation life of about a month could be extended to perhaps a year,
25 depending upon the particular characteristics and specifications of the system, including
26 water characteristics.

1 Thus, as can be seen from the advantages of this preferred embodiment according
2 to the present invention over the prior art, the maintenance required for this preferred
3 embodiment according to the present invention is significantly reduce with respect to the
4 prior art.

5 The present invention requires some pretreatment of the water in cases of water
6 with high turbidity prior to exposure to UV dose zones of the present invention.

7 Traditional means for reducing turbidity including, but not limited to, filtration, dilution,
8 reverse osmosis and chemical treatment may be advantageously employed to increase the
9 UV efficacy of the system according to the present invention. However, certain aspects
10 of the preferred embodiment allow it to more easily handle high turbidity fluids than the
11 prior art.

12 The interface plate may induce turbulence or cause fluid cascade with a non-
13 planar surface, stair-step surface, downwardly sloping surface, or other the like. The
14 induction of turbulence is particularly advantageous when the fluid is turbid. Turbidity,
15 which is the state of water when it is cloudy from having sediment stirred up, interferes
16 with the transmission of UV energy and decreases the disinfection efficiency of the UV
17 light disinfection system. Thus, turbulence, by inducing rotation in the particle, causes
18 all aspects of a particle to be exposed to the UV light. Additionally, the photocatalytic
19 properties of the system reduce turbidity by degrading the compounds or particles
20 responsible for the turbidity. Furthermore, the reflective aspects of the surfaces of the
21 system enhance the efficacy of the system when operated under turbid conditions because
22 the UV light can strike the various aspects of a particle with the need for the particle to be
23 rotating, thus overcoming the opacity of the particle. Another aspect that enhances

1 performance under turbid conditions is the high UV light intensity of the system. The
2 high UV light intensity can more easily compensate for fluctuations in turbidity than
3 lower-intensity systems. Thus, the preferred embodiment has several characteristics that
4 enhance its performance under turbid conditions.

5 In cases where the water has high iron or manganese content, is clouded and/or
6 has organic impurities, it is usually necessary to pre-treat the water before it enters the
7 UV disinfection stage because deposits on the quartz-encased submerged UV lamps,
8 which are immersed in the water to be treated, interfere with the UV light transmission,
9 thereby reducing the UV dose and rendering the system ineffective. Prior art typically
10 employs UV purification in conjunction with carbon filtration, reverse osmosis and with
11 certain chemicals to reduce fouling between cleanings of the quartz sleeves that surround
12 the UV lamps. Thus, another advantage of the preferred embodiment is that turbidity
13 reduction is not necessary for the system to perform adequately, and thus the system
14 eliminates the need for expensive pre-treatment of the fluid to reduce turbidity.

15 The contribution of the reflectance of internal surfaces to the efficacy of the
16 system can be capitalized upon by incorporating UV-reflective materials and reflection-
17 enhance design into the reservoir. These same surfaces can also be manufactured such
18 that they incorporate photocatalysts, as previously taught for the interface plate.
19 Moreover, additional surfaces to support photocatalyst may be added to the reservoir or
20 VRC system. Thus, an integrated design that incorporates UV-reflectant materials, UV-
21 reflectant design, photocatalysts, and additional photocatalyst surfaces will greatly
22 enhance the efficacy of the system.

1 Certain modifications and improvements will occur to those skilled in the art upon
2 a reading of the foregoing description. By way of example, various optical components
3 are used depending upon the particular UV light source or lamp selection for a given
4 system. Also, a plurality of UV light source systems, either planar horizontal or retrofit
5 configurations and/or cylindrical vertical riser configurations, are combined and arranged
6 in series to increase the flow rates for which effective UV disinfection of the fluid occurs.
7 Moreover, a wide range of fluid applications are contemplated within the scope of the
8 present invention, including application of the UV fluid disinfectant system and method
9 to the disinfection of other water containers, water sources, and water-dispensing devices,
10 including, but not limited to, ambient temperature and chilled water tanks, refrigerators,
11 water fountains, water towers, beverage makers, beverage dispensers, dishwashers, water
12 heaters, washing machines, bathtubs, showers, toilets, and water pumps. Additionally,
13 water storage devices that require potable water, but which water is not principally
14 intended for drinking, may be fitted with a UV fluid disinfectant system and method
15 according to the present invention. By way of example and not of limitation, swimming
16 pools, hot tubs, steam rooms, saunas, water parks and ornamental water fountains may be
17 fitted with a UV fluid disinfection system and method according to the present invention
18 in order to disinfect or maintain the microbial purity of the water contained or utilized
19 therein.

20 These multiple points of application may also be connected to a single light
21 source, such as a light pump, by light guides. Such an arrangement would eliminate the
22 need for a lamp or light source at every point of application. Because it may not be
23 necessary to continuously irradiate each point of application, such an arrangement would

1 allow the same size lamp as would be required for a single application to service multiple
2 applications intermittently and/or on demand, thus utilizing the lamp more efficiently.
3 Additionally, placing the lamp exterior to the tank reduces the risk of glass and/or
4 mercury contaminating the water should the lamp or lamp housing break. An additional
5 benefit to such a configuration is that filters previously required in immersion-type
6 systems to prevent such contamination are no longer required.

7 All modifications and improvements have been deleted herein for the sake of
8 conciseness and readability but are properly within the scope of the following claims.

9

CLAIMS

2 We claim:

3 1. An ultraviolet disinfection (UV) system for treating drinking water, the
4 system comprising at least one light source positioned within a housing and connected to
5 a power source for producing a UV light output from the housing, the system including at
6 least one optical component positioned between the at least one light source and the UV
7 light output from the housing, thereby producing a focused, controllable UV light output
8 that has at least one UV dose zone for providing effective sterilization of microorganisms
9 within the water.

10 2. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one UV light source
11 is one lamp.

12 3. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one UV light source
13 is a UV lamp.

14 4. The UV system according to claim 3, wherein the at least one UV light source
15 is a spectral calibration lamp.

16 5. The UV system according to claim 3, wherein the at least one UV light source
17 is an electrodeless lamp.

18 6. The UV system according to claim 3, wherein the at least one UV light source
19 is a mercury halide lamp.

20 7. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one UV light source
21 is a light pump device.

22 S. The UV system according to claim 7, wherein the output from the at least one
23 UV light source is distributed by fiber optic transmission lines.

1 9. The UV system according to claim 7 wherein the fiber optic transmission lines
2 having a first end connected to the housing output such that the UV light output from the
3 housing passes through the fiber optic transmission lines and exiting from a second end
4 such that the UV light output exiting the fiber optic transmission lines is projected into
5 the water.

6 10. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
7 acrylic fibers.

8 11. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
9 glass fibers.

10 12. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
11 liquid core fibers.

12 13. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
13 hollow core fibers.

14 14. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
15 core-sheath fibers.

16 15. The UV system according to claim 8, wherein at least one fluid-containing
17 device is connected to the light pump device via fiberoptic transmission lines.

18 16. The UV system according to claim 1, further including a non-fouling lamp
19 housing thereby eliminating cleaning of the lamp housing to ensure consistent UV
20 disinfection of the fluid.

21 17. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the light housing is affixed to a
22 reservoir and the UV light output disinfects a substantially non-flowing water supply
23 contained within the reservoir.

1 18. The UV system according to claim 17, wherein the system has a non-vertical
2 riser configuration.

3 19. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the lamp housing is affixed to a
4 reservoir with flowing water contained therein.

5 20. The UV system according to claim 2, further including a vertical riser
6 configuration (VRC) wherein the water is moved at a predetermined rate toward the UV
7 light output thereby producing an increasing UV dose within the water as it approaches
8 the light output.

9 21. The UV system according to claim 20, wherein the interface zone further
10 includes at least one additive that influence characteristics of the fluid as the fluid passes
11 through the interface zone and over the surface zone.

12 22. The UV system according to claim 21, wherein the at least one additive is
13 selected from the group consisting of TiO₂, WO₂, ZnO, ZnS, SnO₂, and PtTiO₂ and the
14 like.

15 23. The UV system according to claim 20, wherein the vertical riser configuration
16 system is portable.

17 24. The UV system according to claim 20, wherein the vertical riser configuration
18 system is scalable to applications.

19 25. The UV system according to claim 20, wherein the system is adaptable to be
20 removably connected to a piping system for carrying water to an end user output, such
21 that a multiplicity of systems may be positioned to function at a corresponding
22 multiplicity of end user outputs to provide disinfected, purified water in many locations at
23 once.

1 26. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one optical
2 component is selected from the group consisting of reflectors, shutters, lenses, splitters,
3 splitting reflectors, cascading reflectors, focalizers, mirrors, rigid and flexible light
4 guides, homogenizer, mixing rods, manifolds and other couplers, filters, gratings,
5 diffractors, color wheels and fiber optic transmission lines.

6 27. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one optical
7 component is an off-axis optical component.

8 28. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one optical
9 component is a gradient component.

10 29. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one optical
11 component is UV transmissive.

12 30. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one optical
13 component is UV reflective.

14 31. The UV system according to claim 1 wherein the at least one optical
15 component includes fiber optic transmission lines having a first end connected to the
16 housing output such that the UV light output from the housing passes through the fiber
17 optic transmission lines and exiting from a second end such that the UV light output
18 exiting the fiber optic transmission lines is projected into the water.

19 32. The UV system according to claim 26, wherein the at least one optical
20 component is a lens for focusing light from the light source through an output point in the
21 housing and into the water for disinfection thereof.

22 33. The UV system according to claim 32, wherein the lens is a parabolic lens.

1 34. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one UV dose zone
2 includes a water-air interface dose zone and a variable intra-fluid dose zone.

3 35. The UV system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one UV light source
4 is positioned outside the water to be treated thereby providing effective sterilization of
5 microorganisms within the water.

6 36. An ultraviolet disinfection (UV) system for treating drinking water, the
7 system comprising at least one light source positioned outside the water to be treated and
8 positioned within a housing and connected to a power source for producing a UV light
9 output from the housing, the system including at least one optical component positioned
10 between the at least one light source and the UV light output from the housing, thereby
11 producing a focused, controllable UV light output that has at least one UV dose zone for
12 providing effective sterilization of microorganisms within the water.

13 37. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
14 source is a single UV lamp.

15 38. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
16 source is a spectral calibration lamp.

17 39. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
18 source is an electrodeless lamp.

19 40. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
20 source is a mercury halide lamp.

21 41. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
22 source is a light pump device.

1 42. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV light
2 source is a pulsed lamp device.

3 43. The UV system according to claim 36, further including a non-fouling lamp
4 housing thereby eliminating cleaning of the lamp housing to ensure consistent UV
5 disinfection of the fluid.

6 44. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the light housing is affixed to
7 a reservoir and the UV light output disinfects a substantially non-flowing water supply
8 contained within the reservoir.

9 45. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the lamp housing is affixed to
10 a reservoir with flowing water contained therein.

11 46. The UV system according to claim 36, further including a timer for
12 automatically activating and deactivating the light source at a predetermined time.

13 47. The UV system according to claim 36, further including a vertical riser
14 configuration (VRC) wherein the water is moved at a predetermined rate toward the UV
15 light output thereby producing an increasing UV dose within the water as it approaches
16 the light output.

17 48. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the interface zone further
18 includes at least one additive that influence characteristics of the water as the water
19 passes through the interface zone and over the surface zone.

20 49. The UV system according to claim 48, wherein the at least one additive is
21 selected from the group consisting of TiO₂, WO₂, ZnO, ZnS, SnO₂, and PtTiO₂ and the
22 like.

1 50. The UV system according to claim 46, wherein the vertical riser configuration
2 system is scalable to applications.

3 51. The UV system according to claim 46, wherein the system is adaptable to be
4 removably connected to a piping system for carrying water to an end user output, such
5 that a multiplicity of systems may be positioned to function at a corresponding
6 multiplicity of end user outputs to provide disinfected, purified water in many locations at
7 once.

8 52. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one optical
9 component is selected from the group consisting of reflectors, shutters, lenses, splitters,
10 splitting reflectors, cascading reflectors, focalizers, mirrors, rigid and flexible light
11 guides, homogenizer or mixing rods, manifolds and other couplers, filters, gratings,
12 diffractors, color wheels and fiber optic transmission lines.

13 53. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein at least one optical component
14 is UV transmissive.

15 54. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein at least one optical component
16 is UV reflective.

17 55. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one optical
18 component includes fiber optic transmission lines having a first end connected to the
19 housing output such that the UV light output from the housing passes through the fiber
20 optic transmission lines and exiting from a second end such that the UV light output
21 exiting the fiber optic transmission lines is projected into the water.

22 56. The UV system according to claim 55, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
23 acrylic fibers.

1 57. The UV system according to claim 55, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
2 glass fibers.

3 58. The UV system according to claim 55, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
4 liquid core fibers.

5 59. The UV system according to claim 55, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
6 hollow core fibers.

7 60. The UV system according to claim 55, wherein the fiberoptic lines include
8 core-sheath fibers.

9 61. The UV system according to claim 52, wherein the at least one optical
10 component is a lens for focusing light from the light source through an output point in the
11 housing and into the water for disinfection thereof.

12 62. The UV system according to claim 61, wherein the lens is a parabolic lens.

13 63. The UV system according to claim 36, wherein the at least one UV dose zone
14 includes a water-air interface dose zone and a variable intra-fluid dose zone.

15 64. A method for purifying drinking water comprising the steps of:

16 providing a UV purification system comprising at least one UV light source
17 outside the drinking water to be treated and at least one interface zone established
18 between the at least one UV light source and the fluid to be treated, the at least one UV
19 light source designed, configured, and connected to produce UV light creating at least
20 one UV dose zone outside the fluid;

21 presenting a surface zone on the at least one interface zone, wherein the surface
22 zone has a UV dose zone associated therewith for disinfecting the water to be treated;

1 introducing a pre-treated fluid into the system, the water passing through at least
2 one UV dose zone within the fluid and passing through the at least one interface zone and
3 surface zone UV dose zone;

4 disinfecting the water via exposure to the UV light in the UV dose zones;
5 dispensing the disinfected water outside the system.

6 65. The method according to claim 64, further including the step of forcing water
7 via a hydraulic system through a vertical riser configuration of the system.

8 66. The method according to claim 64, further including the step of modifying the
9 water characteristics via at least one additive on the interface zone causing a reaction in
10 the fluid.

11 67. The method according to claim 64, further including the step of introducing
12 turbulence in the water as the water passes throughout the system, thereby increasing the
13 exposure to UV light and disinfection thereby.

14 68. The method according to claim 64, further including the step of introducing a
15 catalyst at the interface zone.

16 69. The method according to claim 64, wherein the system includes a non-
17 submerged light source.

18 70. A method for providing ultraviolet disinfection (UV) of drinking water, the
19 method comprising the steps of

20 providing a UV disinfection system comprising at least one UV light
21 source coupled with at least one UV-transmissive optical component outside the water to
22 be treated and at least one interface zone positioned between the at least one UV light

1 source and the fluid to be treated, the at least one UV light source designed, configured,
2 and connected to produce UV light creating at least one UV dose zone outside the fluid;
3 presenting a surface zone on the at least one interface zone, wherein the surface
4 zone has a UV dose zone associated therewith for disinfecting the fluid to be treated;
5 introducing a pre-treated fluid into the system, the fluid passing through at least
6 one UV dose zone within the fluid and passing through the at least one interface zone and
7 surface zone UV dose zone;
8 disinfecting the water via exposure to the UV light in the UV dose zones;
9 dispensing the water outside the system.

10 71. The method according to claim 70, further including the step of forcing water
11 via a hydraulic system through a vertical riser configuration of the system.

12 72. The method according to claim 70, further including the step of modifying the
13 water characteristics via at least one additive on the interface zone causing a reaction in
14 the water.

15 73. The method according to claim 70, further including the step of introducing
16 turbulence in the water as the fluid passes throughout the system, thereby increasing the
17 exposure to UV light and disinfection thereby.

18 74. The method according to claim 70, further including the step of introducing a
19 catalyst at the interface zone.

20

FIG. 1A
PRIOR ART

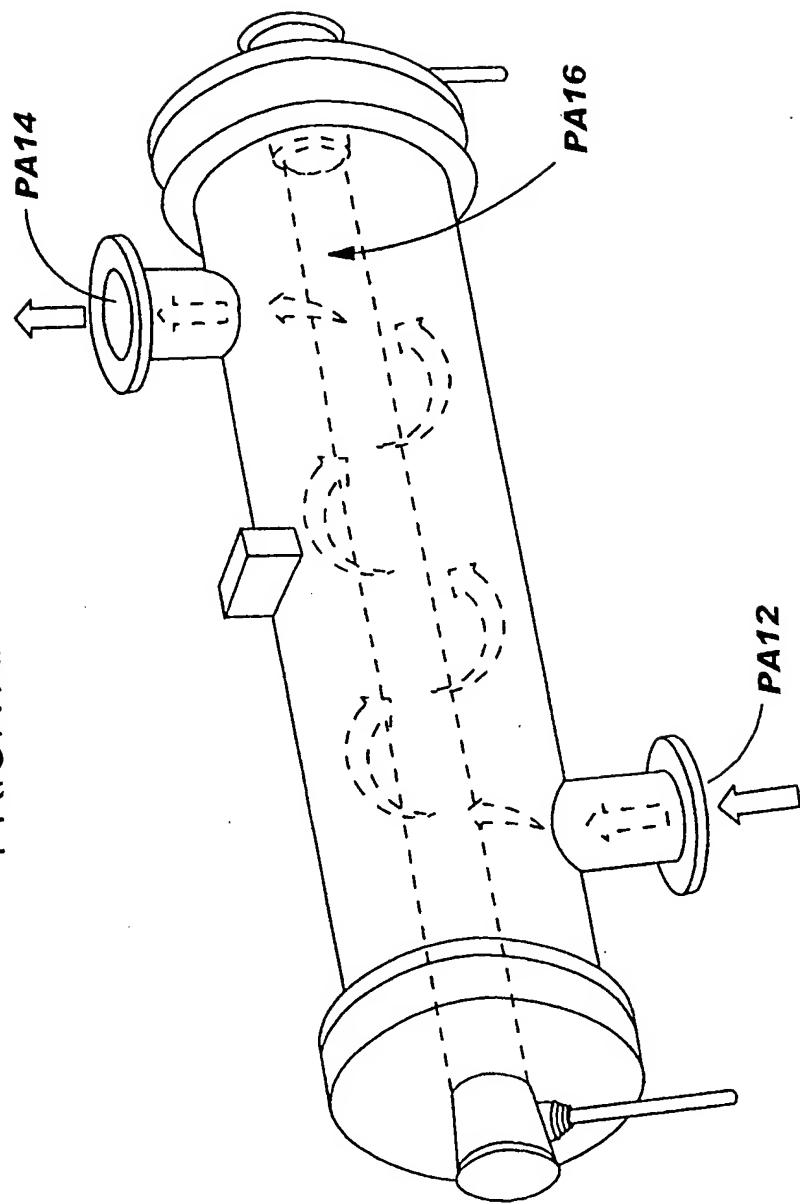
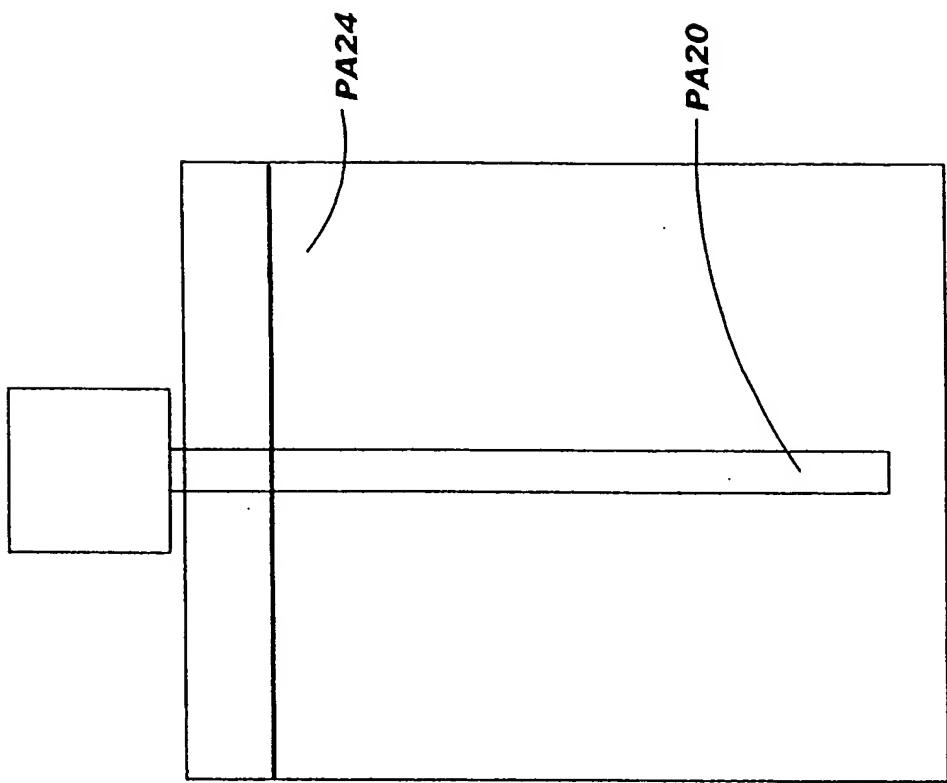


FIG. 1B
PRIOR ART



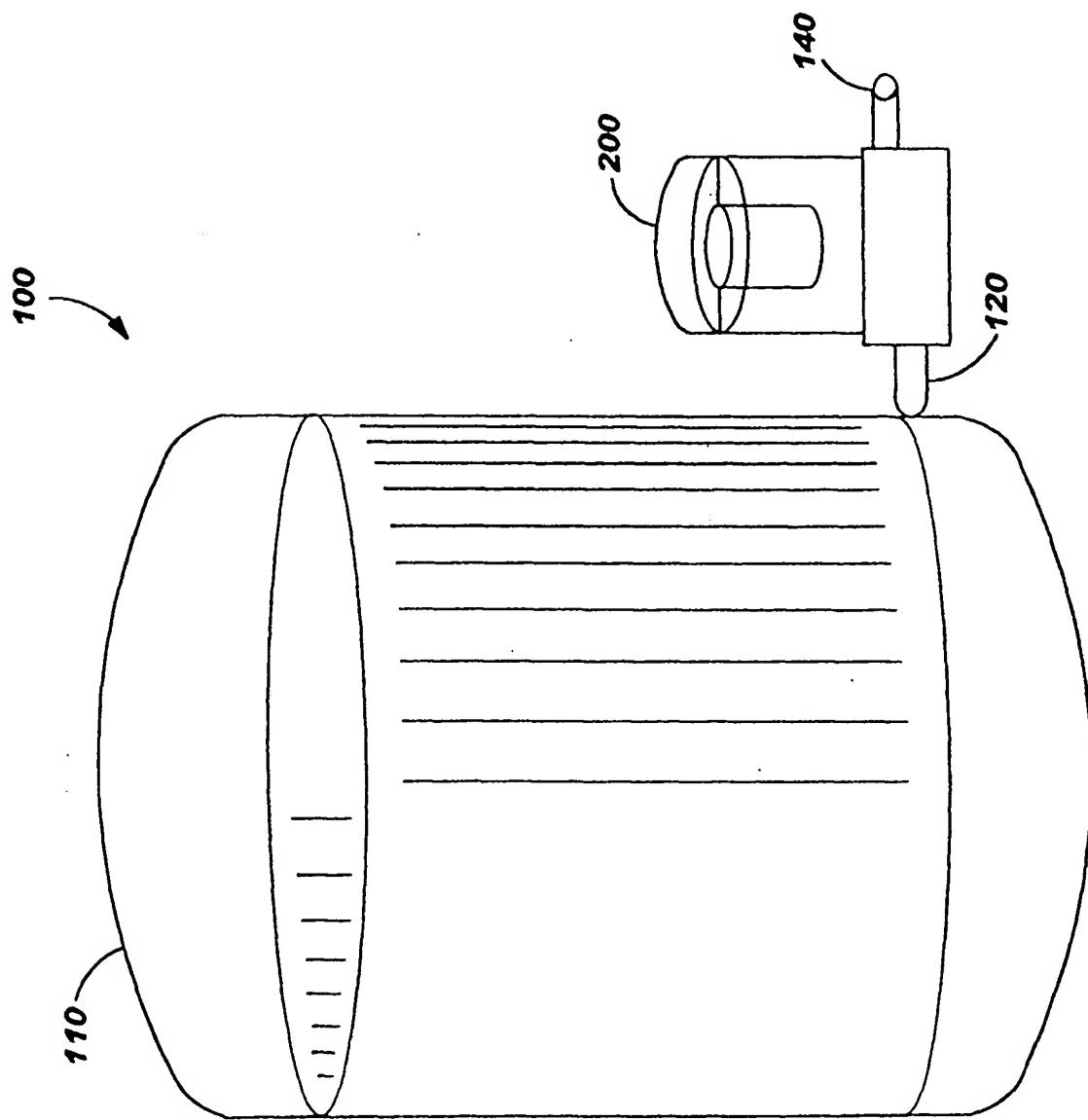


FIG. 2

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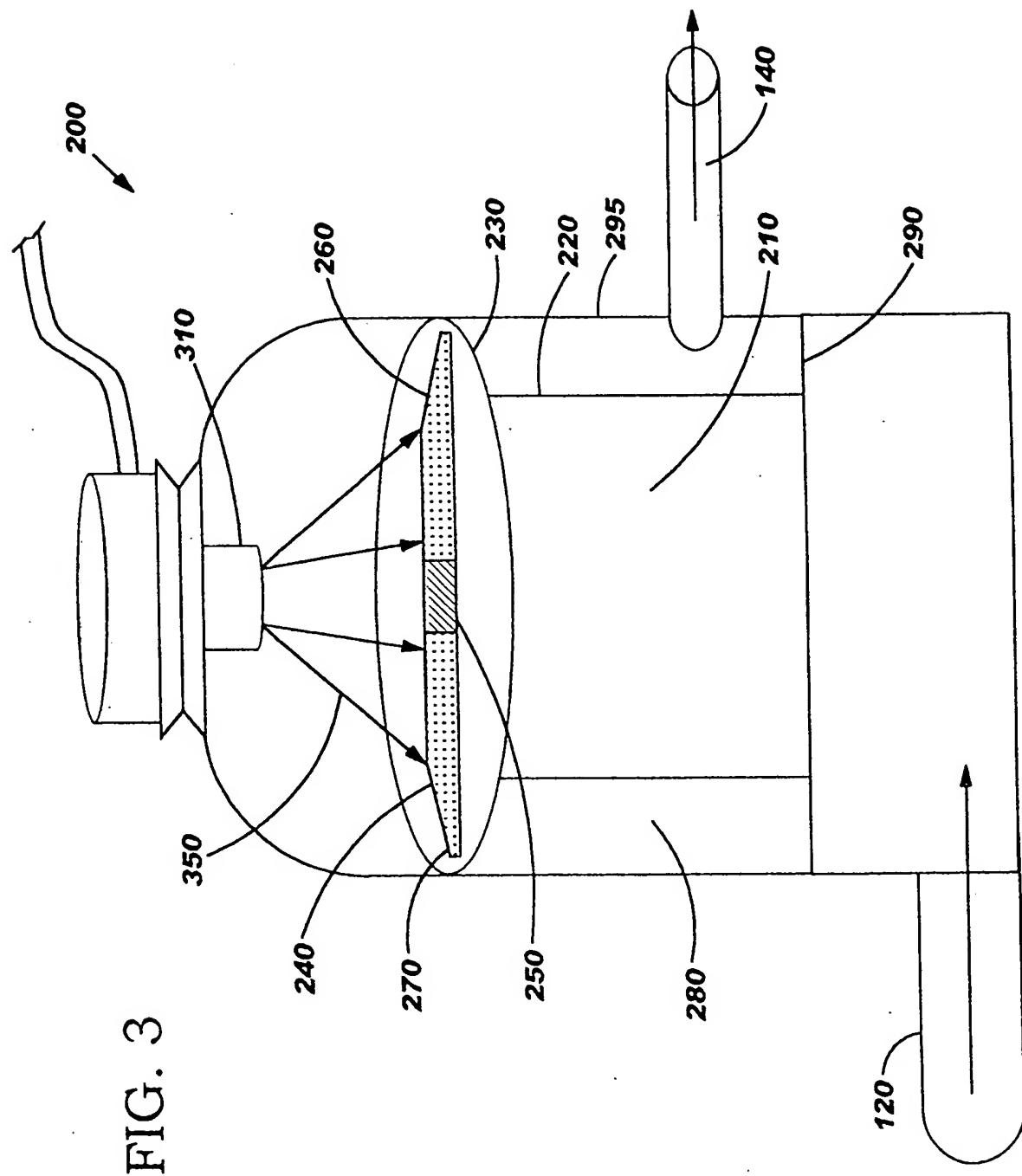
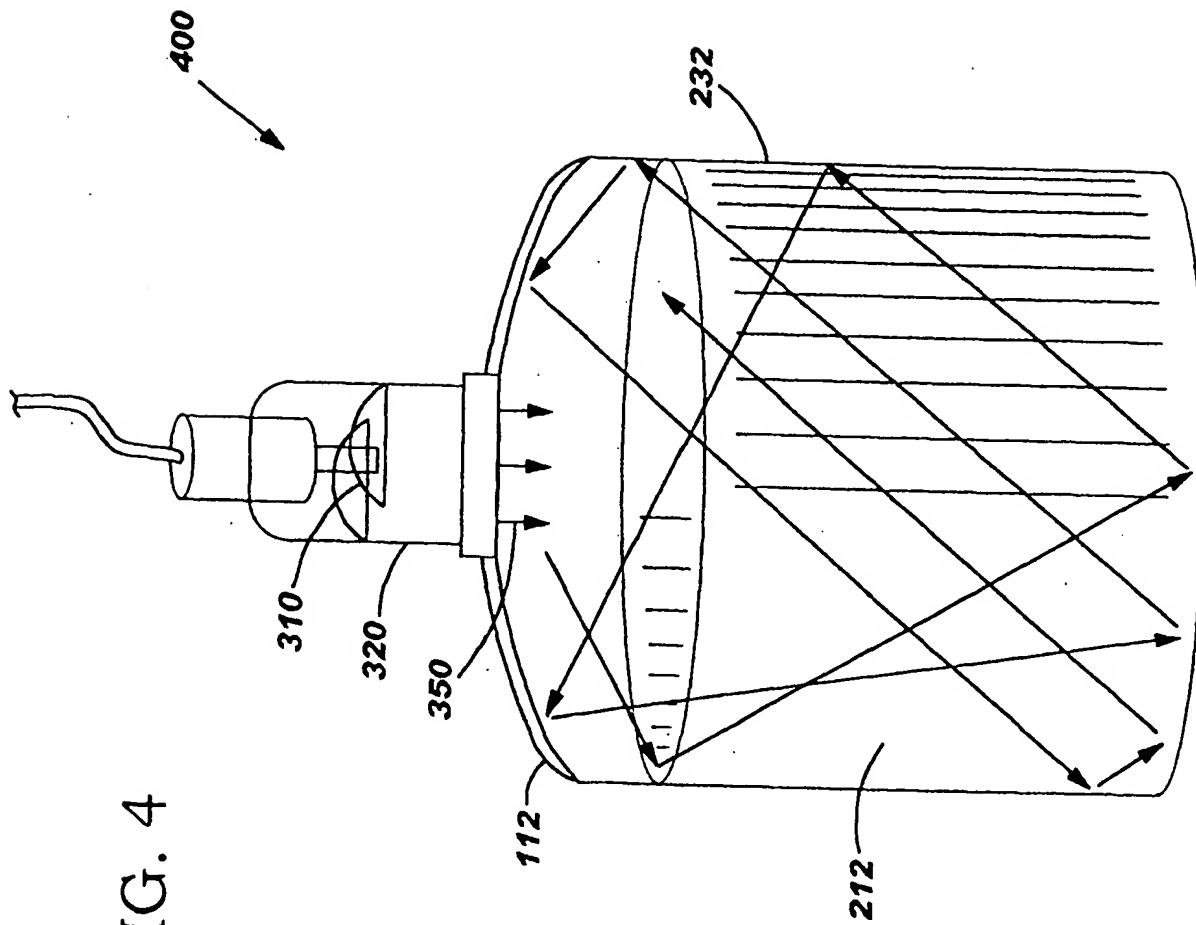


FIG. 3

FIG. 4



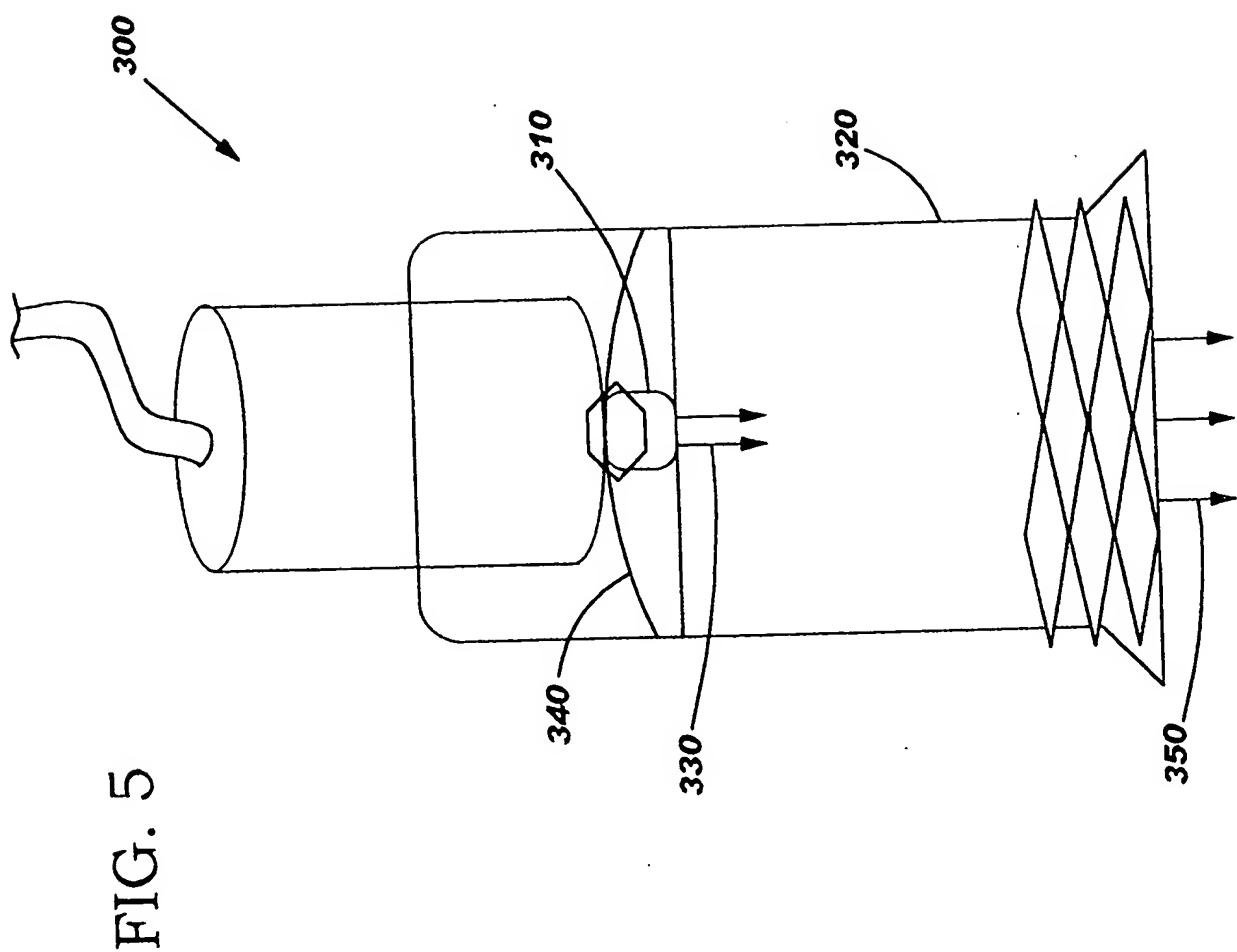


FIG. 5

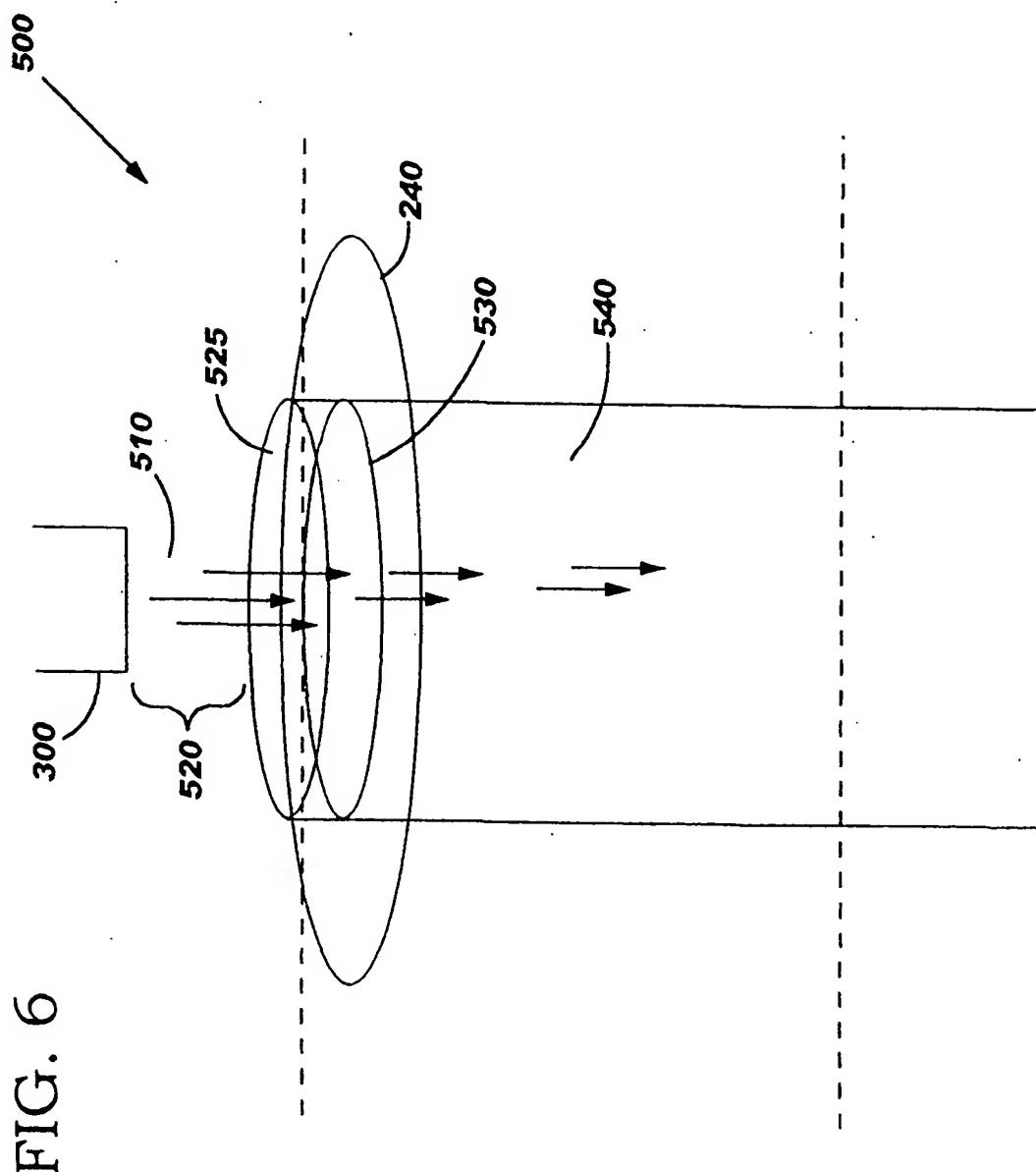


FIG. 6

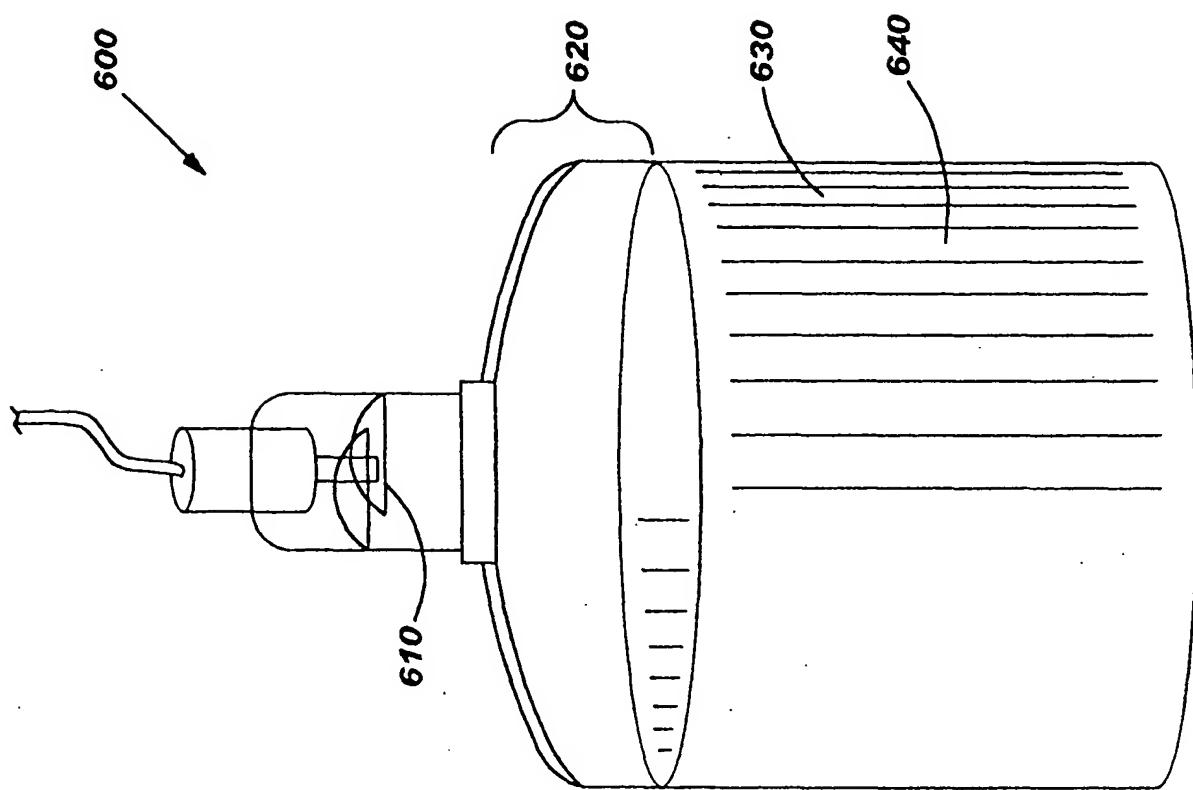


FIG. 7

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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): RE-MOTELIGHT, INC. [US/US]; P.O. Box 14188, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 (US).

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(72) Inventors; and
(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): HORTON, Isaac

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ZA, ZW.

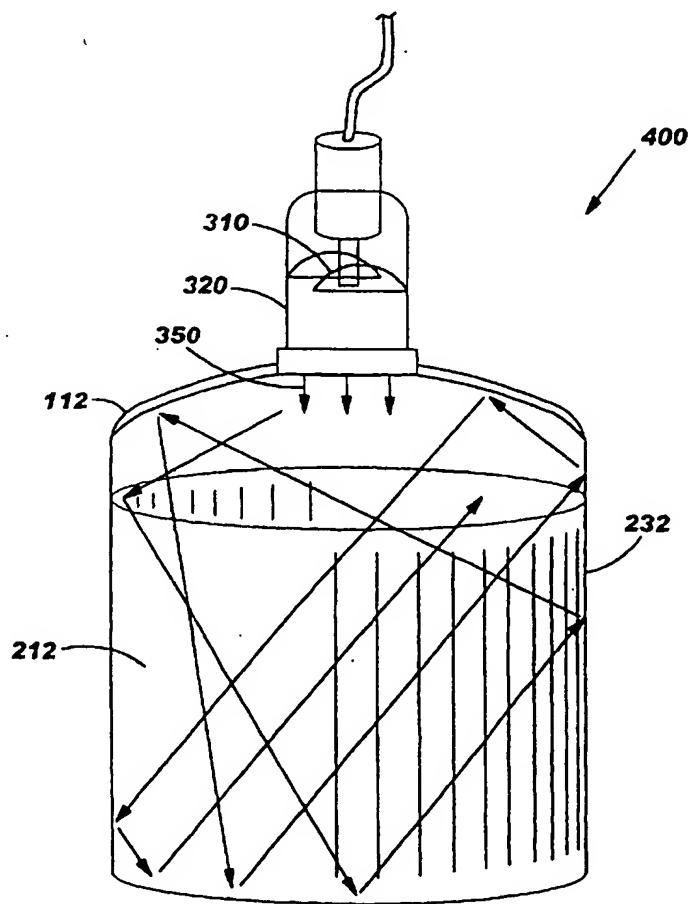
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: DRINKING WATER UV DISINFECTION SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: An ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system and method for treating fluids including a configuration and design to function effectively with at least one UV light source or lamp (310) that is not submerged in the fluid, which provides exposure to at least one UV dose zone. The UV light source (310) may be presented in a vertical riser configuration, wherein the UV light source (310) is positioned above the fluid to be treated and projecting a UV dose zone downward toward and into the fluid to be treated, with the fluid moving upward toward the UV light source (310). Alternatively, the UV light source (310) may be presented in a non-vertical riser configuration, wherein the UV light source (310) is positioned above the fluid within a reservoir (112) and a UV dose zone projected downward into the static fluid (212).



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/44542

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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 US CL : 422/24, 22, 1, 186.3; 250/455.11

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 422/24, 22, 1, 186.3; 250/455.11

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
 Please See Continuation Sheet

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 6,090,296 A (OSTER) 18 July 2000 (18.07.2000), see entire document.	1-74
A	US 6,117,337 A (GONZALEZ-MARTIN et al), 12 September 2000 (12.09.2000), see entire document.	1-74

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&"

document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

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Date of mailing of the international search report

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 Box PCT
 Washington, D.C. 20231
 Facsimile No. (703)305-3230

Authorized officer

Krisanne M. Thornton

Telephone No. 703-308-0661

PCT/US01/44542

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 3:

EAST

UV, interface plate, dose zone